

Net Neutrality is essential to free speech, equal opportunity and economic innovation in my life, and the lives of countless Americans.

Hereâ€™s my story, which Iâ€™m happy to testify before congress:

I am a 64-year-old woman who has struggled all of her life with poverty. I raised my two children without the court appointed child support (surprise! surprise!). 13 years ago, when my daughters were still in high school, I put myself through graduate school and earned my doctorate degree. But still I could not find a way to earn a living. I was too old and too educated (they call it 'over qualified') to find a job where I could make a significant contribution to my society-- besides my good, smart daughters.

Then, I wrote a book for artists. I knew it was smart and important, but the traditional book publishing companies had become too bureaucratic and blind sighted with marketing myopia to see my vision (or even hear the business rationale I outlined for them). I used POD (a web-based, Publishing On Demand business), then set up my own small website to funnel people to my publisher.

That was 5 years ago. Today my book is recommended across the country, from the Canadian Federation of Artists to the Boston Museum School of Art. I have a flourishing career as an art career coach, writer, and entrepreneur. I have artist clients from around the world. In fact, I have a waiting list of clients who can't wait to get into the queue to pay me.

And how do they find me? Why, my website, of course.

In 2007, I developed and ran the first-ever, professional art-career development conference (online or off). Now an annual event, artists from 46 US states and 16 countries have participated. The response is overwhelming. After the first annual smARTist® Telesummit in 2007 participants generated 7 pages of spontaneous testimonials. What started out as just an annual event has turned into a year-round, web-based business to help artists sell their artwork and also earn a living contributing to our society and world.

And this year, for the first time in way too many years, I will not need fuel assistance! I will not need any government assistance! Not only have I raised myself out of poverty, I'm helping others to do the same!

And why? All because of the Internet and the World Wide Web.

This technology is a perfect match for my skills and abilities. For the first time in my life, I have work that fits like a glove. I am happy. I am prospering. I wake up every day full of gratitude for life and the joyous work I get to do.

And now Verizon, Comcast, and AT&T â€“all the Big Fat Greedy Cats - want to take that away from me? And you are going to help them do just that?

You have got to be kidding.

Just when I get to enjoy my life, the abundance of my own making, the freely created job-of-a-lifetime (literally!), the Greedy Big Boys want to step on my life and crush it.

No.

That's all I have to say, just "No."

Not only do these companies have more than enough, they don't have the right - on any level - to crush the joy and economic freedom of my life.

Net Neutrality is essential to free speech, equal opportunity and economic innovation in America. Since the FCC removed this basic protection in 2005, the top executives of phone and cable companies have stated their intention to become the Internet's gatekeepers and to discriminate against Web sites that don't pay their added tolls.

This fundamental change would end the open Internet, as we know it. It would damage my ability to connect with others, share information and participate in our 21st century democracy and economy.

I will do everything in my power to make sure that the FCC ensures that broadband providers do not block, interfere with or discriminate against any lawful Internet traffic based on its ownership, source or destination.

I will write, join, and help organize. I will not be polite. I will scream and shout. I will NOT lie down and roll over while one more fat cat lines his pockets, and I am forced out of the first, viable source of economic freedom I have tasted in 62 years.

Outraged,
Ariane Goodwin, Ed.D.

The FCC can't cut private deals that would hand control over the Internet to a few massive phone and cable companies. Any compromise that allows Internet providers to build toll lanes online is not real Net Neutrality.

The agency must stand with the public and protect consumer access to the most important

communications medium of our time. The FCC must regain its resolve to protect Net Neutrality on wired and wireless networks. Please reclassify broadband as a "telecommunications service" and keep the Internet open and free of corporate gatekeepers.